

— OCTOBER —

School Zone/School Bus

Marylanders are back to the fall morning routine. Parents are hitting the snooze button just one more time before waking the kids, hastily throwing together breakfast and lunches and managing to grab a cup of coffee before heading off to work and school, and repeating the rush again in the trip back home. These daily treks during the time we commonly refer to as "rush hour," represent the time that most pedestrian and fatal crashes occur – especially in October.



Here are some tips to help motorists and school-bound kids stay safe.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

For motorists:

- Maryland State Law forbids the passing of a stopped school bus while its lights are flashing and its stop arm is extended.
- Stay alert. Watch for children playing and congregating near bus stops.
- Slow down. Watch for children walking in the street, especially if there are no sidewalks in the neighborhood.

For children riding the bus:

- Stay away from the bus until it comes to a complete stop and the driver signals you to enter.
- Make sure that the driver can see you.
- Be aware of the street traffic around you. Drivers are required to follow certain rules of the road concerning school buses, however, not all do. Protect yourself and be on the look out.

Safety when walking or biking to school:

- Work out a safe route to school with your parents.
- Choose the quickest route with the fewest street crossings.

The correct way to cross the street:

All pedestrians should always stop at the curb or the edge of the road and look left, then right, and then left again before crossing. Continue looking in this manner until they are able to cross safely.

- Use intersections with crossing guards.
- Walk your bike through intersections.
- Walk with a buddy.
- Wear reflective material...it makes you more visible to street traffic.
- Make sure if you are riding your bike to school, you wear a helmet, it's the law!

— NOVEMBER —

Inclement Weather Driving, Roadway Safety (Engineering)

November often brings the first icy blasts of winter. Be prepared! If you've been through a Maryland winter season, then you know driving during harsh winter weather events can cause challenges for even the best of drivers. Here's your survival guide for staying on the go in the snow:

Before hitting the road...

- Buckle up and make sure everyone else in the vehicle does, too.
- Pack your "survival kit"—including flashlight, blanket, extra warm clothing, bottled water, shovel and basic tool kit.
- Check your car's antifreeze, oil, battery, defroster, heater, wipers, washer fluid and gas levels, and headlights (it's a good idea to keep your gas tank filled during winter months).
- See and be seen. Take the time to remove all snow and ice from your car, especially on the windows, wipers, mirrors, lights and from the top of the vehicle.

Once on the road...

- Slow down! Driving safely on winter roads may mean reducing your speed to under the posted limit. This means SUV drivers as well as car motorists.
- Drive defensively! You may know and obey the rules of safe driving but many others ignore them and don't give snow/ice on the road the respect they deserve.
- NEVER pass a snowplow, salt truck or plow train (several plow/salt trucks in a row). Operators will have difficulty seeing and hearing you or the edge of a plow may catch your vehicle.
- Turn on your headlights. Maryland law requires use of headlights while windshield wipers are in use.
- Be a sport and report abandoned vehicles. For emergency help, dial #77 on your cell phone.

— DECEMBER —

Impaired Driving



Despite the tireless efforts of law enforcement agencies and other advocates, impaired drivers continue to kill someone every 30 minutes across the nation.

What is impaired driving?

Impaired driving is defined as a reduction in the performance of critical driving tasks due to the effects of alcohol or other drugs.

Checkpoint Strikeforce, Maryland's campaign against impaired driving, will be in full effect during the December holiday season. During this campaign, Maryland police officers from all jurisdictions will be conducting sobriety checkpoints and cracking down on impaired driving.

Before you get behind the wheel, remember that there are plenty of people counting on you not to be a danger on the roads — your employer, your family, and most of all, children, for whom the holidays are a very special time.

- Don't risk it - If you plan to drive, don't drink.
- Choose a sober designated driver before partying.
- Take mass transit, a taxicab or ask a friend to drive you home.
- Spend the night where the activity is being held.
- Immediately report impaired drivers to law enforcement.
- Always wear your seat belt — it's the best defense against an impaired driver.



CRASHES ARE NO ACCIDENT

You hold the key!

Join Maryland in
12 Months of SAFETY

Log on to
marylandroads.com
for more information

— JANUARY —

Crashes Are No Accident

Join Maryland in a New Year's Resolution to reverse the trend of increasing fatal crashes in our state.

Background:

In 1999, Maryland experienced fewer than 600 traffic fatalities. The 598 fatalities, on state and local roads, were the lowest in 30 years, since record-keeping began in 1969.

After seeing the number decline over the years, the trend line reversed to 617 in 2000, 662 in 2001, and 661 in 2002.

That is 661 families, 661 communities all impacted by sudden tragedy. To put this in perspective, statewide in 2002 there were 159 more people killed in traffic crashes than in homicides in the State of Maryland, 502 homicides versus 661 traffic fatalities. This is simply unacceptable! And we must do something about it.

The good news is that behind the wheel, you're in control.

- Buckle Up! Make sure you and your passengers are properly restrained — this is the single most important thing you can do to protect your life and the lives of your loved ones if involved in a motor vehicle crash.
- Never drive while impaired. Avoid alcohol and drugs if driving. Assign a designated driver.
- Drive attentively.
- Drive defensively, not aggressively.
- Share the road with pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and commercial truck drivers.



By focusing on the three "E's" of safety, engineering, education and enforcement, we can save lives!

— FEBRUARY —

Child Passenger Safety

No matter what you're doing or where you're going, children are your most important cargo. Children riding in an inadequate child safety seat or one that is poorly installed are in very real danger of injury or even death during a crash.

- Always place a child under the age of 12 in the back seat. It is generally the safest place in a crash.
- Infants under one year of age or weighing under 20 pounds must be in a rear-facing child safety seat. Once the child has reached both one year of age and 20 pounds, the child may then sit in a forward-facing child safety seat.
- A child can move into a booster seat once they have reached 40 pounds and 4 years of age.
- Lap and shoulder belts will only function correctly if the child has reached at least 4'9" in height. Although this usually occurs approximately when the child is eight years old, continuing to properly use a federally approved safety seat will keep your child as safe as possible in the event of a crash.
- For more information on child safety seats, there are several sources of great information, including:
 - Maryland Kids in Safety Seats, 1-800-370-SEAT
 - Maryland State Highway Administration 1-410-787-5822
 - National Highway Traffic Safety Administration 1-888-DASH-2-DOT

Effective October 1, 2003, all children younger than six years old, regardless of his/her weight, or weighing 40 pounds or less, regardless of his/her age, must be secured in a federally approved child safety seat according to the safety seat and vehicle manufacturers' instructions. For vehicles registered outside the state of Maryland, all children younger than four years, regardless of weight, or weighing less than 40 pounds, regardless of age, must ride in a safety seat.



— MARCH —

Motorcycle and Truck Safety

Drivers tend to look for other cars, not motorcycles. Over two-thirds of car-motorcycle crashes are caused by drivers, not motorcyclists. It is difficult to estimate a motorcycle's speed and because motorcycles are small, they are sometimes hard to see.

Advice to drivers:

- Respect the motorcyclist. Motorcycles are vehicles with the same privileges as any vehicle on the roadway. Give the motorcyclist a full lane of travel.
- Be on the look out for motorcycles.
- Give motorcyclists plenty of space. Traffic, weather and road conditions require motorcyclists to react and maneuver differently than the vehicle driver.
- Be courteous. Being courteous, non-aggressive & cooperative can go a long way in reducing crashes.

Motorcyclists have an equally important role in safety. Never assume that the drive of another vehicle can see you. It is your responsibility to make your presence known and follow all traffic laws.

Advice to motorcyclists:

- Wear the proper gear. The proper equipment, including a motorcycle helmet, will protect your in the event of a crash, and reflective material will enhance your visibility to other motorists.
- Ride so you are seen. Use lane positioning to be seen. Ride with your headlight on and consider using a modulating headlight.
- Give yourself space and time to react. Allow space for emergency braking. Make lane moves gradually.
- Signal your intentions. Signal before changing lanes. Avoid weaving between lanes. Flash your brake light when you are slowing down and before stopping.
- Be courteous and respect other motorists.

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Maryland Department of Transportation

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MAKE A DATE WITH SAFETY EVERYDAY

Trucks:

Trucks and cars need to look out for one another. Trucks pose a very special challenge for many drivers, especially those that are not familiar with how these large vehicles operate. Here are a few very important safety tips for sharing the road safely with trucks:



Beware of the "NO-ZONES"

Much like cars have blind spots, so do trucks. The difference is that the spots are much larger. These No-Zones make it difficult for the driver to see. Be aware and keep in mind that your visibility is the key to your safety. If you can't see the truck driver in the truck's mirror, the truck driver can't see you.

Never cut in front of trucks

Cutting in front of any vehicle creates a potentially dangerous situation and it becomes even worse when forcing a heavy vehicle to brake suddenly. When it is necessary to pass a truck, make sure there is plenty of room between you and the truck to avoid dangerous braking situations.

Trucks turn differently than cars

Trucks make wide turns, especially right turns. Trying to squeeze between a turning truck and the side of the road can result in a very serious crash. Be patient and give the trucks plenty of room to turn.

— APRIL —

Distracted Driving & Work Zone Safety

Spring brings with it a sense of renewal and an awakening of the senses — the perfect time to remind ourselves to remain attentive behind the wheel, avoiding distracted and drowsy driving.

- An obvious cause of fatigue is lack of sleep. Get enough rest. Long-distance driving is hard work, and you



need to be fresh and alert.

- Avoid long drives at night. The glare of lights, both on your dashboard and outside your car, increases the danger of highway hypnosis.
- In your vehicle, keep the temperature cool, with open windows or air conditioning in the summer and frugal amounts of heat in the winter.
- Do not use cruise control; keep your body involved with the driving.
- Watch your posture. Drive with your head up and your shoulders back. Legs should not be fully extended, but flexed at about a 45 degree angle.
- Take frequent breaks. At least every two hours, stop at a gas station, restaurant or rest stop. Get out of the car, walk around, even jog or do calisthenics. Exercise fights fatigue.

It is even more important to stay attentive in work zones by **THINKING ORANGE** — **Orange** is the standard color for construction activity. If you see orange when driving, be prepared for possible construction vehicles, dust, lane shifts, uneven or unmarked pavement or even stopped vehicles ahead of you. Slow down, stay alert, plan ahead and expect the unexpected.

— MAY —

Occupant Protection, Seat Belts

Wearing your seat belt may not be the most exciting thing about your trip, but it is the most important.

According to studies, using your safety belt can decrease the chances of fatal injury in a crash by as much as 60 percent. Seat belt use is your best defense.

Maryland law requires everyone seated in the front seat to have his/her seat belt fastened. If passengers are 15 or younger, they must always wear a seat belt regardless of where they are seated.

- Never operate your car or truck until everyone is buckled up!
- Set a good example for your children. Use your seat belt every time you travel.
- Seat belts not only save lives but they are your best defense against a drunk driver.
- Always use the seat belt properly — using just the lap belt does not protect you as well in a crash.
- In Maryland, you can get pulled over and given a ticket for not having your seat belt fastened.

Help keep you and your family safe — buckle up as soon as you get in the car and use the belt properly.



— JUNE —

Pedestrian and Bike Safety

What do motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists have in common? They share the same road and need to look out for one another. There is no winner in a contest between a vehicle and a cycle or pedestrian! In 2002, 101 pedestrians and seven cyclists were killed on Maryland roads.

For the car driver:

- Stop for pedestrians at crosswalks and intersections — it's the law.
- Slow down, pay attention and obey the posted speed limit.
- Always look out for pedestrians and cyclists, especially before turning at a green light or making a "right on red" or "left on solid green."
- Leave at least three feet of passing space between the right side of your vehicle and a bicyclist.
- Reduce your speed when passing a cyclist, especially if the roadway is narrow.
- Children on bicycles are often unpredictable in their actions. Expect the unexpected.



For the cyclist:

- Ride in the same direction as traffic.
- Cyclists are subject to the same rules and regulations as motor vehicles.
- Obey all road signs and signals.
- Wear your helmet correctly — at the front of the head and not tilted back.
- Wear reflective gear after dark and have a light on your bike.

For the pedestrian:

- Cross the street at marked crosswalks and intersections whenever possible.
- Stop and look left, right, left every time before crossing the street.
- Begin crossing the street on "Walk" signals — never on solid or flashing "Don't Walk."
- Use sidewalks. If there are none, walk facing traffic so you see vehicles and drivers see you.
- Make eye contact with drivers so they see you.
- Stay visible after dark with light-colored or retroreflective clothing.

— JULY —

Aggressive Driving; Impaired Driving

Aggressive driving is one of the largest threats we face while driving. Although it's not certain what makes someone an aggressive driver, here are some of the things we know about them:

- Aggressive drivers climb into an automobile and take out their frustrations on anybody at any time.
- For them, frustration levels are high, and level of concern for fellow motorists is low.
- They run stop signs and red lights, speed, tailgate, weave in and out of traffic, pass on the right, make unsafe lane changes, make hand and facial gestures, yell, honk horns, and flash their lights.

To protect yourself from aggressive drivers:

- First and foremost, make every attempt to safely get out of their way.
- Put your pride in the back seat. Do not challenge them by speeding up or attempting to hold-your-own in your travel lane.
- Avoid eye contact.
- Ignore gestures and refuse to return them.
- Report aggressive drivers to the appropriate authorities by providing a vehicle description, license number, location, and if possible direction of travel.
- You can report aggressive or impaired drivers to the police by calling # 77.
- If an aggressive driver is involved in a crash farther down the road, stop a safe distance from the crash scene, wait for the police to arrive, and report the driving behavior that you witnessed.

Maryland takes aggressive driving very seriously and is part of the Smooth Operator Task Force. Smooth Operator targets aggressive drivers and we need your help to keep Maryland's roads safe. Do your part — report aggressive driving immediately before it's too late.

Impaired Driving:

For many people, summer means cookouts and parties, particularly around the 4th of July weekend. Please remember to not drink and drive. If you plan on drinking, choose one of these alternatives to driving:

- Pick a designated driver for the evening and treat them to non-alcoholic drinks and food.
- Call a cab for a ride home.
- Make sleeping arrangements at a hotel or a friend's house.

Keep summer safe for everyone. Don't drink and drive.



— AUGUST —

Grand Driver



While we all want to keep driving for as long as we can, none of us wants to be a threat to ourselves or to others because we are no longer able to drive safely. A leading cause of accidental death among older persons is automobile crashes.

It's important to remember that most seniors are capable, and have a lifetime of valuable driving experience. Decisions about a person's ability to drive should never be based on age alone.

Fortunately, most seniors take appropriate steps when they detect a problem with their driving. But it's not always obvious when a general health problem, vision problem, or a side effect of medications will lead to a driving impairment.

Self awareness is the key. People who can accurately assess their fitness to drive can adjust their driving habits and stay safe on the road. They will retain the personal mobility that comes with driving while limiting the risks to themselves and to others.

Checklist for older drivers:

- Listen to what people tell you who know best and care the most about you.
- Discuss driving with your doctor—he or she can evaluate the interactions and side effects of medications you may be taking.
- Refresh your knowledge of safe driving practices and learn about new traffic control and roadway design features through a mature driver class.
- Begin planning for alternative ways of meeting your mobility needs. Now is the time to learn about mobility options in your community—try them out...see what works best for you.

Resource list:

To find a mature driver education class in your area:

- Toll Free: 1-888-AARP-NOW (1-888-227-7669)
- AAA Safe Driving for Mature Drivers (Call your local AAA club for availability of classes)

For more information about benefits and services for older persons provided by the Agency on Aging in your area:

- Senior Information & Assistance Programs Toll Free: 1-800-AGE-DIAL (1-800-243-3425) TTY-410-767-1083

— SEPTEMBER —

Young Driver & "Back to Basics"

Remember the sheer joy of hearing the jingle of keys for the first time after getting your driver's license? The privilege to drive is a passport to mobility. But this privilege comes with a great deal of responsibility. Irresponsible driving can lead to senseless deaths, personal injury, and property damage. Drinking or using drugs and driving significantly increases chances of being involved in a crash. Remember a crash can happen in a second with life-changing - and ending results.

Did you know that 15 to 20 year-old drivers are the highest risk group for a fatal crash? Seventy percent of fatalities in this age group involve the use of alcohol.



Young drivers should:

- Gain as much experience as possible with a mature, seasoned driver.
- Avoid risk-taking behavior. Immaturity and impulsiveness of young drivers often leads to poor judgment and high-risk behaviors such as speeding and improper passing.
- Avoid high-risk situations. These situations include nighttime driving, passengers who distract the driver, and peer pressure to take risks.
- Do not drink and drive or engage in illegal drug use.
- Always wear a seat belt.

Back to Basics: Know your sign language.

The language of signs is made up of shapes, colors and locations. Knowing the language of signs can assist you in finding your destination easily and safely - especially when traveling through unfamiliar territory.

- **Green signs** guide motorists. The nation's standard green highway and distance signs are the backbone of Maryland's guide signing. They provide information about interchanges, exits, highway junctions and major cities and towns. Mile-markers and overhead street/road signs are also green.
- **Blue signs** inform motorists and provide information about attractions and motorist services such as food, gas and lodging.
- **White signs** are regulatory in nature and include speed limit and stop signs. Oftentimes, these signs are white, black and/ or red.
- **Orange signs** warn motorists - look for orange signs to warn of upcoming roadway work zones and detours.